

“ up, some of them were melted ; others snapped in  
 “ sunder ; others had their hafts burnt ; others their  
 “ sheaths either singed or burnt ; others not.” From  
 all which circumstances, duly considered, I think no-  
 thing certain in favour of cold fusion can be fairly  
 drawn.

---

XXXI. *An Account of a Meteor seen at Shefford, in Berkshire, on Saturday, October 20th, 1759 ; with some Observations on the Weather of the preceding Winter : In a Letter to Thomas Birch, D. D. Sec. R. S. from Richard Forster, M. A. Rector of Shefford.*

Reverend Sir, Shefford, Octob. 31, 1759.

Read Nov. 8, 1759. **O**N Saturday the 20th instant, about Six in the evening, a ball of fire fell nearly east from this place. I did not see it myself. My servant (who is a very sober, honest fellow) says it was nearly of the same size with the moon, and full as bright as she ever shines : its motion was very swift, and, as far as he could judge (for it was out in a moment) quite downright, i. e. perpendicular to the horizon.

And now my hand is in, I cannot forbear acquainting you with an observation I have made, which bids fair to overset a maxim pretty strongly established in the world, as not being only believed and depended on by the vulgar and middling people, but mentioned

Qq 2 (as

as such, I think, by several authors. In short, the maxim is this; viz. that a plentiful year of mast is an infallible prognostic of an hard or severe winter. Now, it happened last year, that provisions of this sort were as plentiful as ever was known; the trees and hedges being loaded in such a manner, as to bend and break under the pressure of their own weight: and yet the winter was the mildest, perhaps, that ever happened in this country: and accordingly not one quarter of nature's store was consumed. We had no ice, but once, and that not the thickness of an half crown, which did not continue 24 hours. I see by Cuff's tables, published in a monthly paper, that, in London, the thermometer was never below 32; and so low as this but twice, and then only by starts. I had ranunculus's in full bloom from the middle of December to the middle of February, and they not sheltered, but by a wall north, 25° east. In the middle of January, I had self-sowed marigolds and violets in bloom. Jan. 15, the bees roared, and were as busy as they are in the height of the working season: and Jan. 18, the birds sung as cheerfully as they generally do in May.

It seems probable to me, that the great abundance of berries and wild fruits (by which I mean mast) is intirely owing to a very backward spring; for, when the blossoms do not open till pretty late in May, they are secure from those inclement blasts, which, when they unfold themselves sooner, do pinch and blight the greatest part of them. I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your affectionate brother,

and most obliged humble servant,

Richard Forster.

XXXII. *An*